



The President's Daily Brief

~~*Top Secret*~~ 16 November 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
16 NOVEMBER 1968

1. Soviet Union -
Egypt

[redacted] observers in Egypt recently reported sighting two Soviet surface-to-surface missiles. They say they saw a ballistic missile which has a 160-mile range, but we suspect they may have sighted a 20-mile tactical rocket instead.

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[redacted] Either Soviet weapon system could carry nuclear or chemical warheads, but we think it highly unlikely that Moscow would give such warheads to the Egyptians.

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2. Czechoslovakia

Dubcek seems to have retreated from some basic tenets of his earlier philosophy in his speech opening the Central Committee meeting. Most notably, he implied that the "class struggle" would have to be reopened--an ominous hint of a return to repression.

Still caught between Moscow and the Czech population, Dubcek steered a middle course which will probably satisfy neither. First to be heard from will be the liberals, who hold a big majority in the Central Committee itself. Over 140 of the committee's 190 members have said they want to address the meeting.

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3. Panama

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4. Peru

Velasco told

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that he would expel all
US citizens if US aid and Peru's sugar
quota were suspended.
advised him to calm down and recognize
the realities of US law.

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5. Venezuela

We will probably see more guer-
rilla activity as the elections of
1 December approach, but our embassy
believes the security forces will be
able to keep the terrorists from
bringing off anything big.

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6. Congo (Kinshasa)

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Abuses of Demilitarized Zone: North Vietnam's response to US complaints about shellings from the Demilitarized Zone typically sidestepped the basis for the complaints and focused on alleged US violations of the understanding on which the bombing halt is based. By putting on the record charges that the US has intensified the war in the South and continued "illegal" flights over the North, Hanoi's spokesman in Paris established a basis for future threats to end or impede the Paris talks. For the moment, however, the Communists are stressing their desire to get on with the talks and avoiding any hint of imminent delaying tactics.

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North Vietnamese Army Forces in South Vietnam: A CIA-DIA working group has recently concluded a joint review of all-source intelligence on the number of North Vietnamese Army personnel serving in South Vietnam. This group concluded that there were about 140,000-160,000 North Vietnamese in South Vietnam at the end of August. Of this total, about 130,000-140,000 were estimated to have been in combat units, either North Vietnamese Army units or as fillers in Viet Cong units, and 10,000-20,000 were in support organizations of the administrative services.

The uncertainties resulting from the widespread redeployment of forces during the past two months and the increasingly ambiguous nature of the information available on infiltration make it extremely difficult to provide a more current estimate. It is thought, however, that the August estimate provides a reasonable picture of the number of North Vietnamese forces committed in the South at the present time, including those units that have recently moved to sanctuary areas in North Vietnam, Cambodia, and the base areas in Laos.

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Le Duc Tho En Route to Paris: Hanoi has announced that Le Duc Tho is on his way back to Paris. He left Hanoi on 15 November, probably aboard one of North Vietnam's VIP aircraft. [REDACTED]

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Soviets and Chinese Slug it Out: [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] another set-to between Soviet and Chinese Communist embassy personnel in Hanoi. According to an individual who [REDACTED] had witnessed the event, the Chinese accosted the Soviets in public and berated them for getting the North Vietnamese to agree to an expansion of the Paris talks. One word led to another, and the Chinese finally started a brief fist fight. The embarrassed North Vietnamese have strengthened the guard details at both embassies out of concern that one side or the other might try to renew the fight.

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North Vietnamese Coastal Shipping: North Vietnam's small fleet of coastal merchant ships and tankers has ventured south of Haiphong for the first time since US bombing of the North began in 1965. Until the 1 November bombing halt, the eight large cargo ships were restricted to runs between Haiphong and the North Vietnamese coal ports, northward to Hong Kong and some Chinese ports. Since then, communications intercepts have shown nearly all of them to be operating off southern North Vietnam near Quang Khe or Dong Hoi.

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[REDACTED]

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL
ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report
today.

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